



EXHIBITION PREVIEW

When M F Husain comes to town

While one can argue that his entire career was marred by controversy, one can equally make a rational claim that it is his chequered life that made M F Hussain, the celebrated Indian painter, a larger than life figure. MF was an iconic artist, a critically acclaimed filmmaker, an accomplished photographer, a lesser known poet, and each of his iconoclastic identities transformed him from a painter with a humble origin to one of the most celebrated exponents of subcontinent art. His works are essentially cosmopolitan, and along with some of his peers, revolutionised the way Indian art was presented to a wider audience transcending boundaries.

Beginning Wednesday, 24 January, 2018 Galleri Kaya, at Uttara, Dhaka is about to showcase some of the more important graphic arts done by the master painter. Although this is not the first time MF's serigraphs and lithographs have been displayed in the country, this recent venture by the gallery is the first major solo show of Husain in Bangladesh.

After centuries of colonial rule, the tempestuous sequence of events that led to the partition of the subcontinent changed the lives of the people forever. The struggle and the horror left an indelible mark on the psyche of every witness to this watershed moment of history. As for artists the strife to come to terms with memories of the tarnished past and the hope of a future — one that was perhaps for the first time in the hands of people themselves — was even more poignant.

Lines were now being drawn in every sphere of life and some, like M F Husain, opted to redefine 'roots and culture' and reinvent 'art' in unconventional manners hitherto alien to India.

Husain was primarily self-taught and started his professional career as a

painter for a film industry that would soon thrive in the city of Bombay. This had a great impact on his mind and love for cinema is something MF carried with him for the rest of his life. His film, *Through the Eyes of a Painter*, in 1967, was a winner of the prestigious Golden Bear Award, and even in the 2000s he was busy making films. In the last decades of Husain's life his public admiration of Madhuri Dixit earned him ill-repute in the fraternity, yet the 'Gajagamini' series of paintings are one of his most well received works.

Soon after the partition of 1947, M F Husain was invited to join the Bombay Progressive Artists' Group (PAG), a short-lived art group founded in post-partition Bombay.

